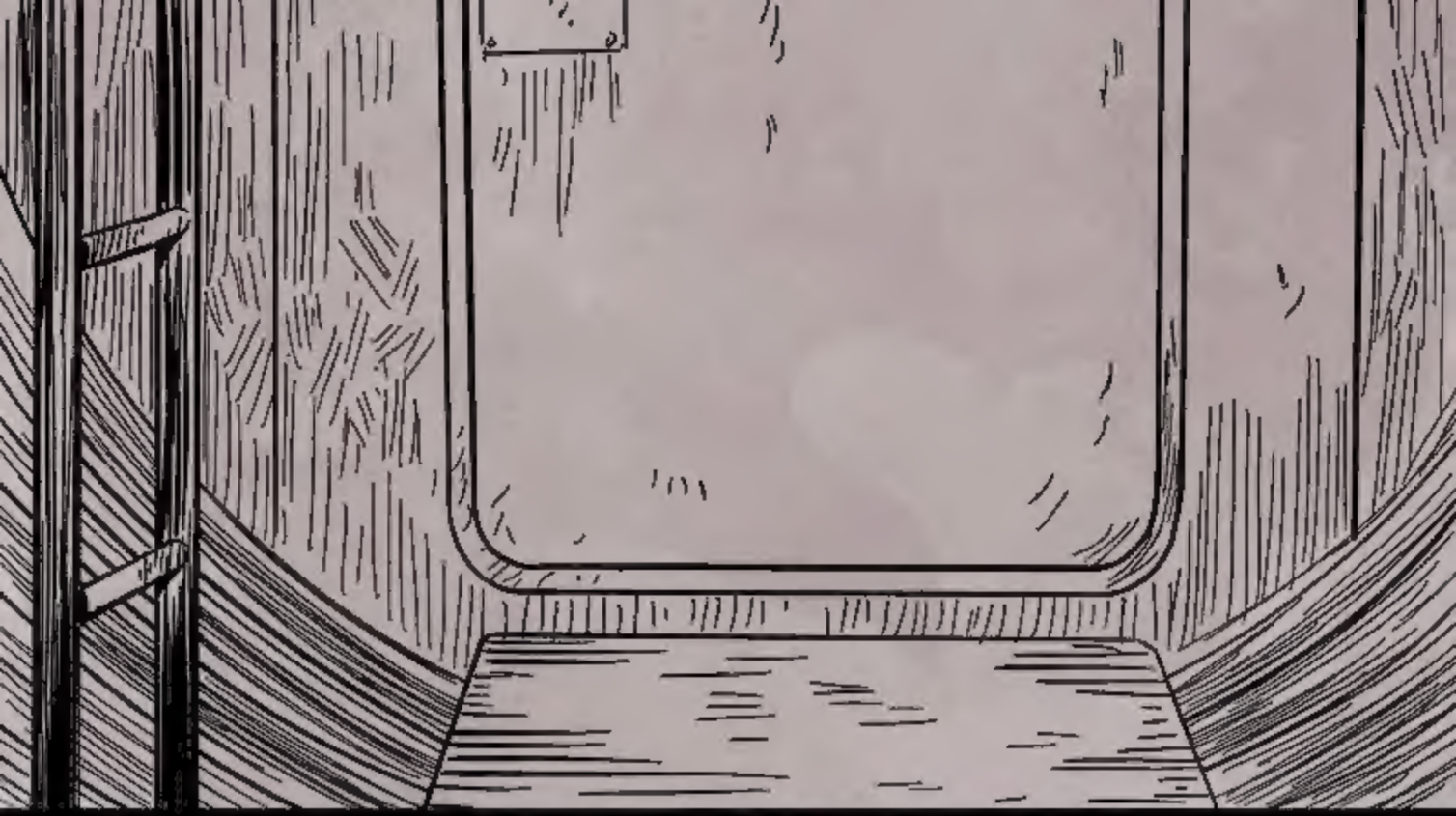
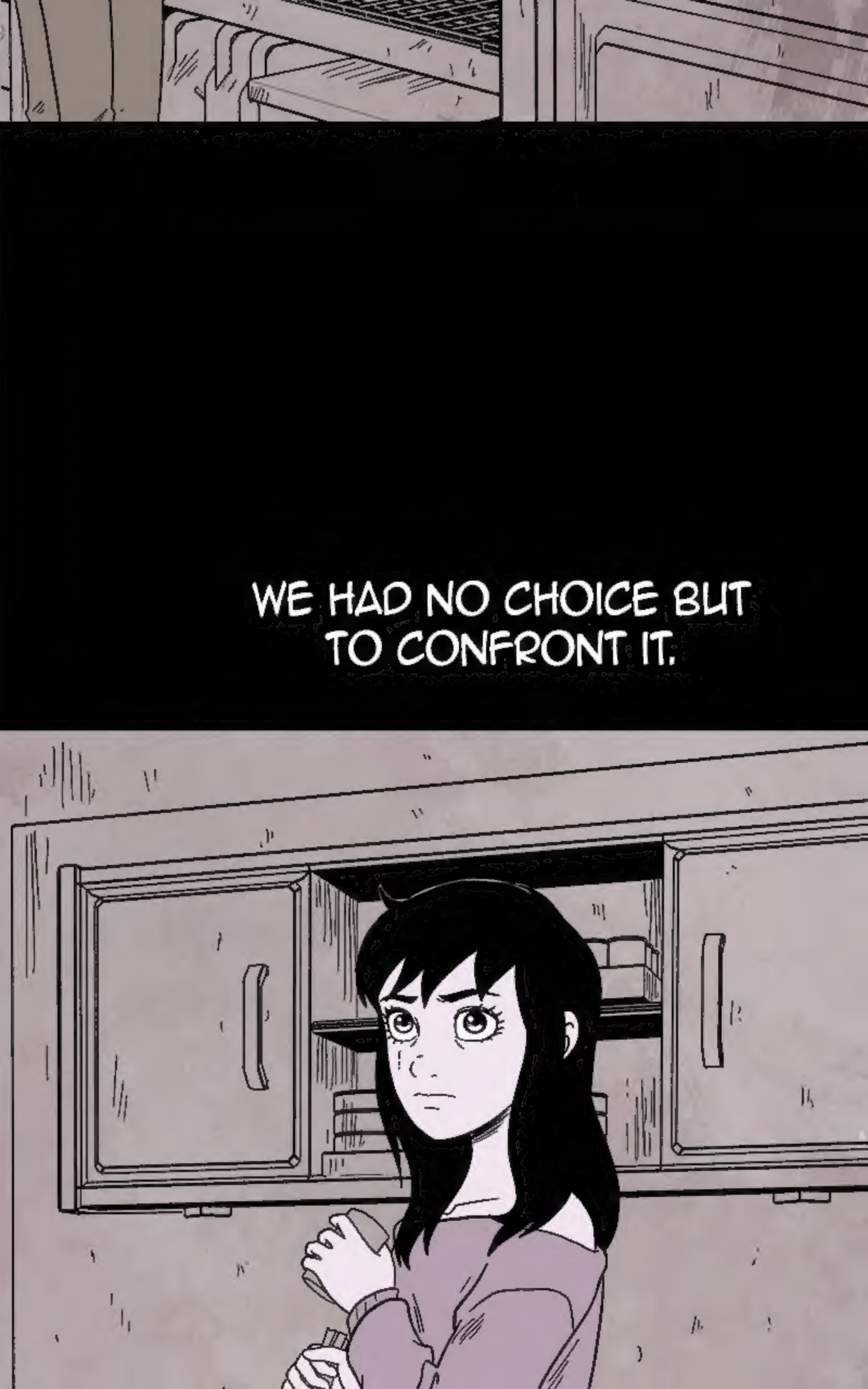


THERE WAS NO AVOIDING
IT ANYMORE.

IT WAS A CONVERSATION WE'D BEEN TRYING TO PUT OFF.

BUT NOW...


WE HAD NO CHOICE BUT
TO CONFRONT IT.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT ASHLEY?

FIGHT

PART THREE

WE CAN'T TAKE HER WITH US.
NOT DOWN INTO THE MINES.

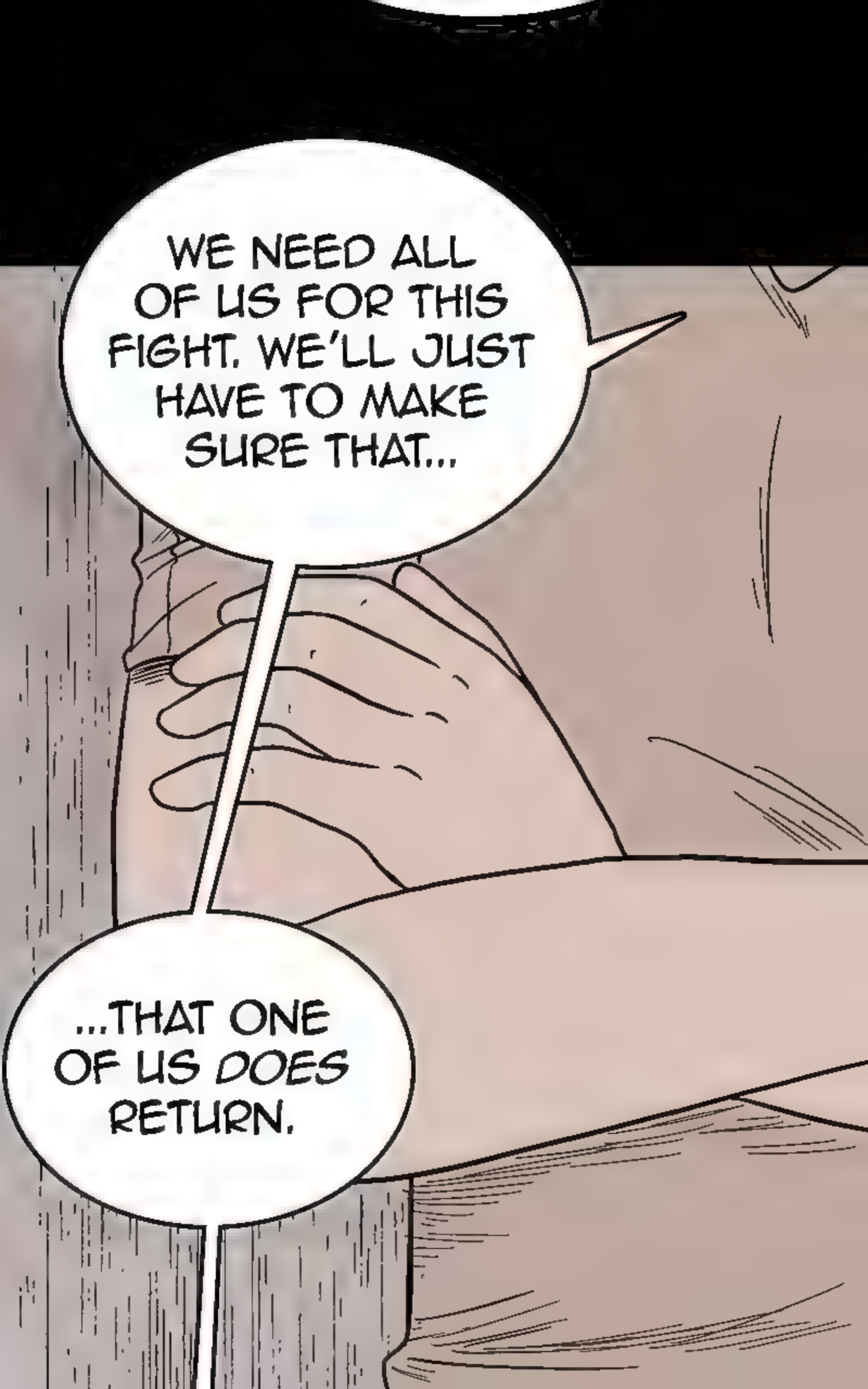
WE JUST CAN'T.
BUT WE CAN'T LEAVE HER HERE.
I KNOW.

SHE CAN'T LOCK THE DOOR BEHIND US.
AND EVEN IF SHE COULD...

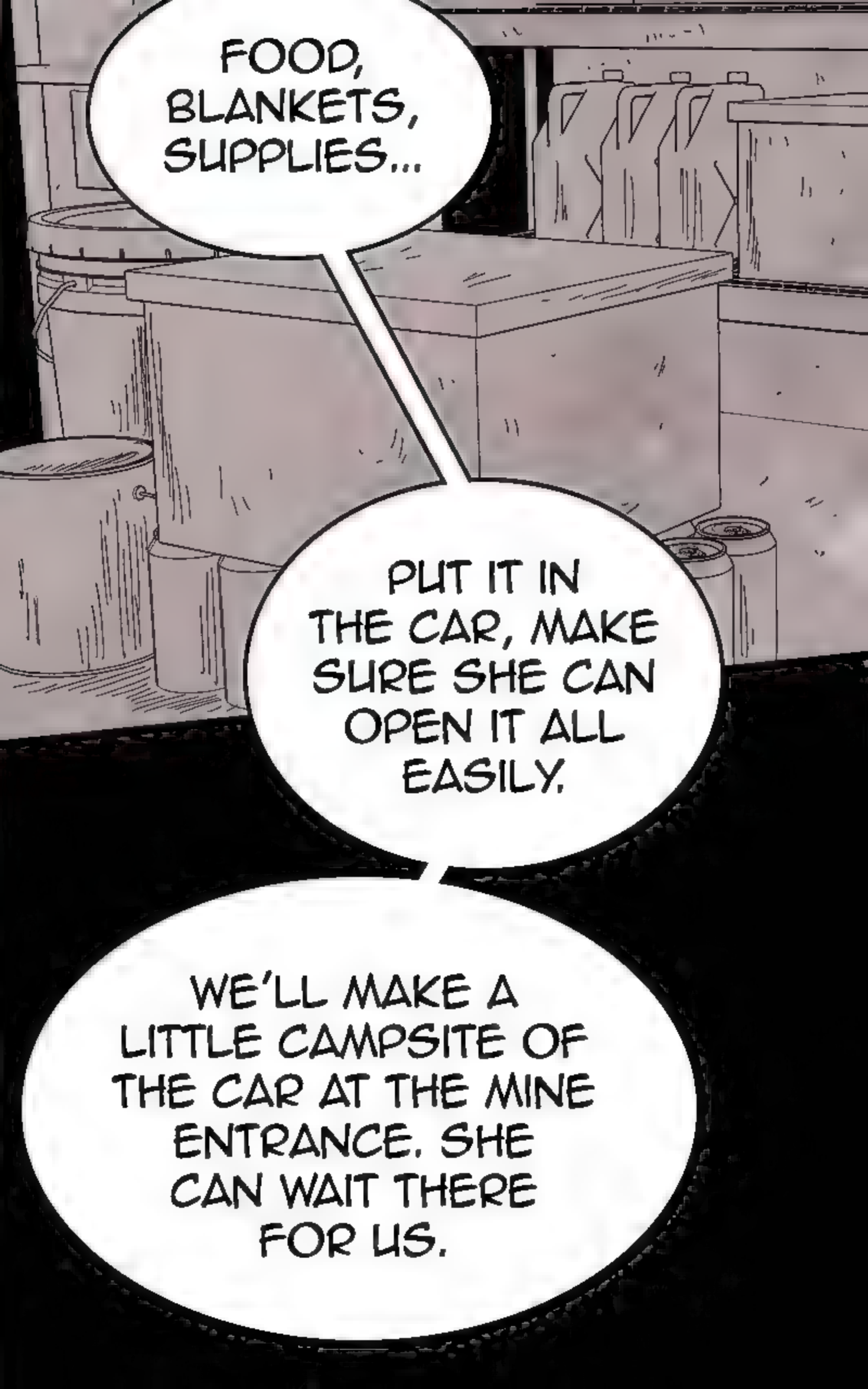
WHAT IF... WE DON'T COME BACK?
ANY OF US?
SHE'LL RUN OUT

OF FOOD EVENTUALLY.
SHE'LL HAVE TO GO UP ABOVE, AND THAT...*THING* IS THERE...
I KNOW, I KNOW. I'VE TRIED A MILLION IDEAS OUT.
THERE'S NO SAFE OPTION.

WE *CAN'T* TAKE HER INTO THE MINES, NOT WITH EXPLOSIVES AND FIRE AND THAT BLACK STUFF...
IT WOULD BE INSANE TO RISK A CHILD DOWN THERE.

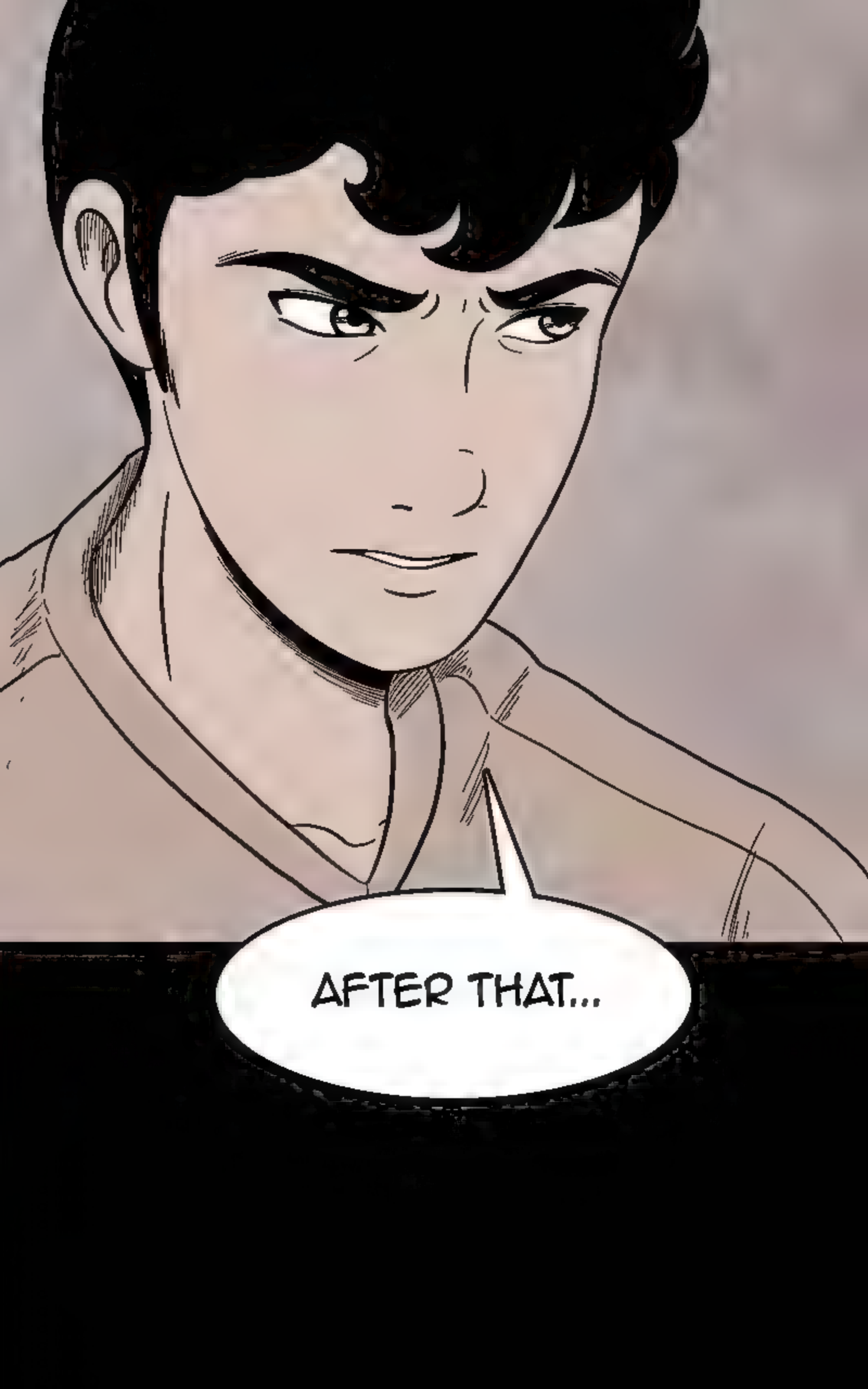

WE NEED ALL OF US FOR THIS FIGHT. WE'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT...
...THAT ONE OF US *DOES* RETURN.

THAT'S A VERY BIG "IF," FELIX.
OKAY, BUT...
WE'LL...WE CAN PACK UP AS MUCH STUFF AS POSSIBLE.

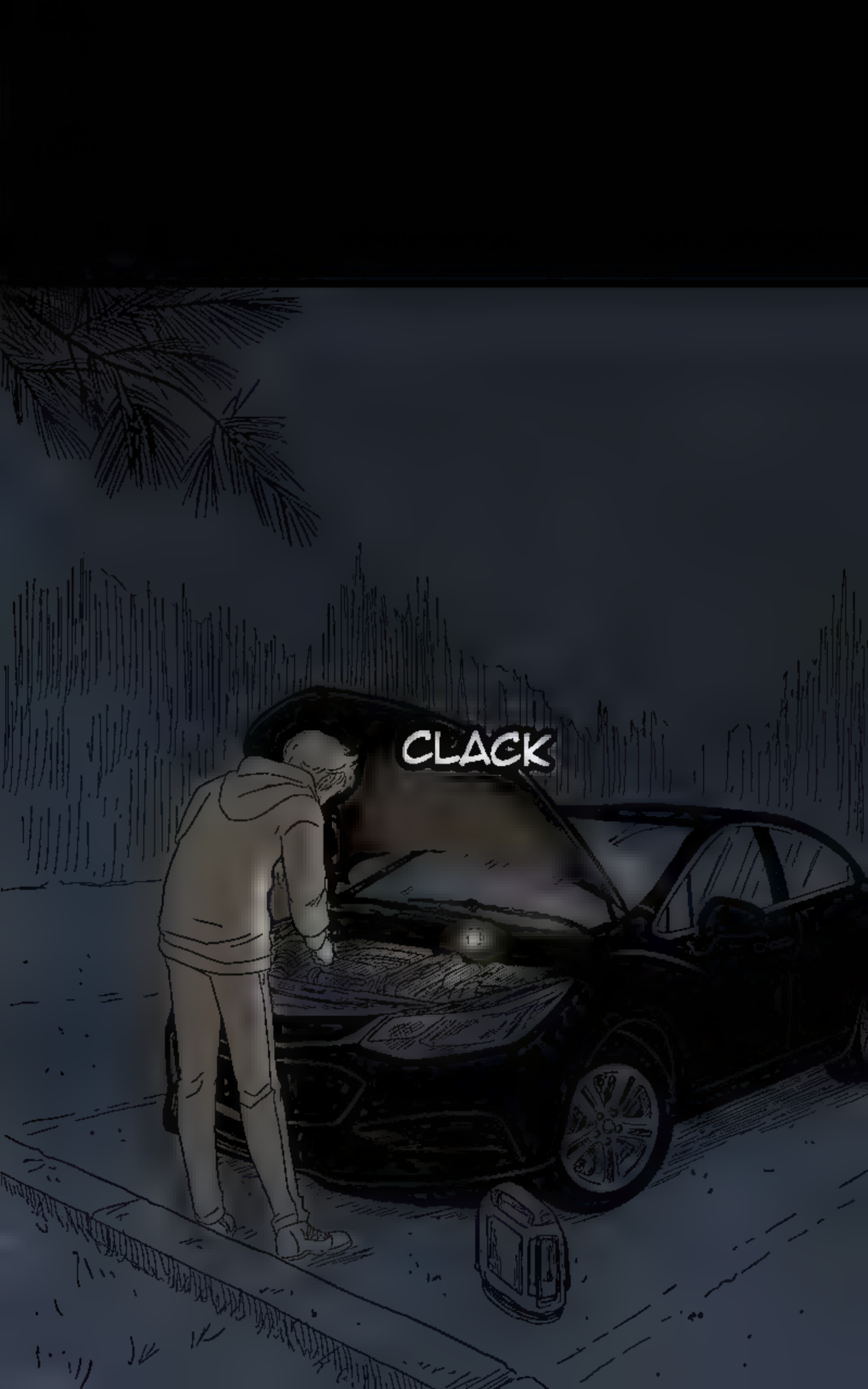

FOOD, BLANKETS, SUPPLIES...
PUT IT IN THE CAR, MAKE SURE SHE CAN OPEN IT ALL EASILY.
WE'LL MAKE A LITTLE CAMPSITE OF THE CAR AT THE MINE ENTRANCE. SHE CAN WAIT THERE FOR US.

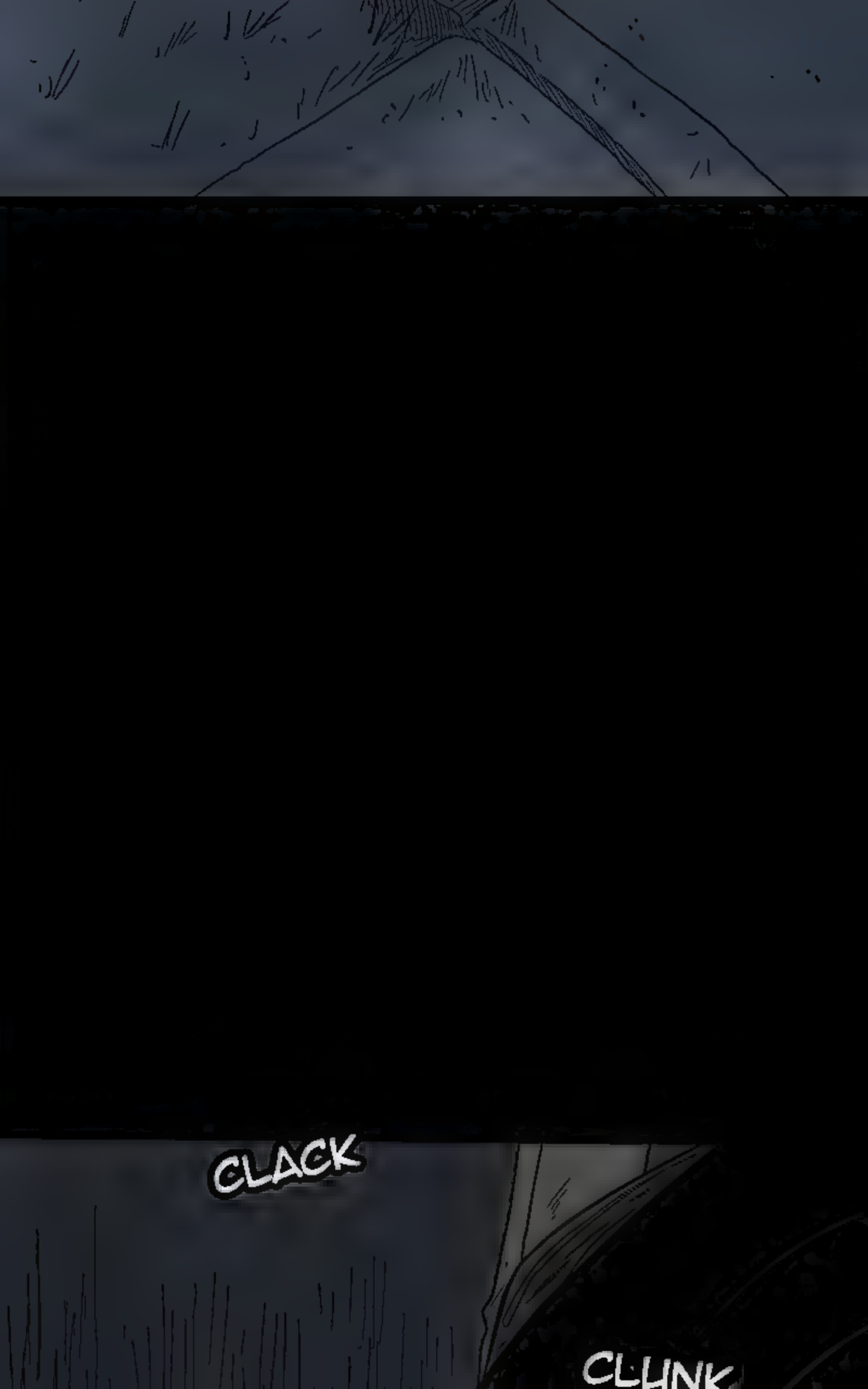
IF WE DON'T MAKE IT OUT...

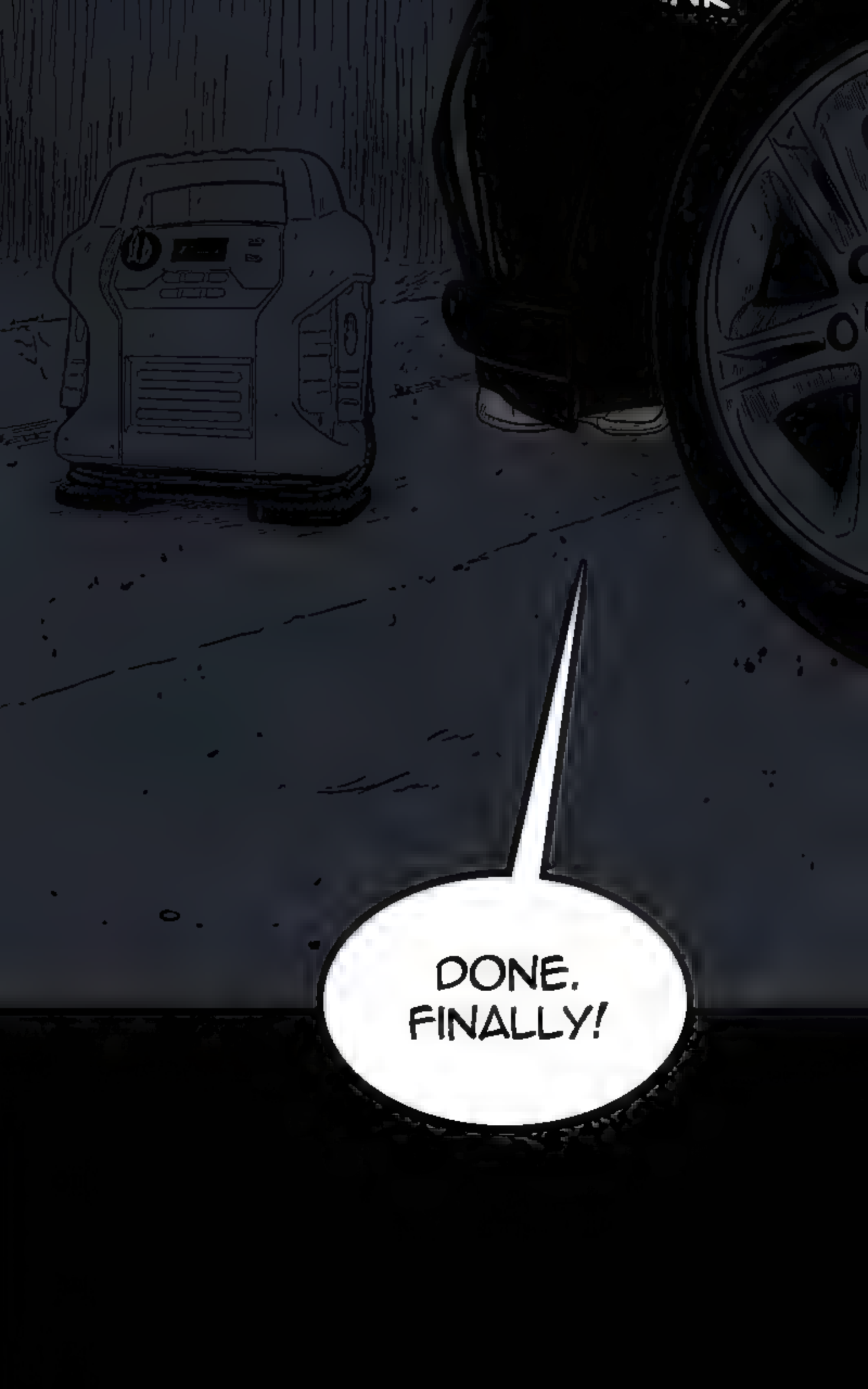
...SHE'LL HAVE ENOUGH TO SURVIVE ON FOR A LITTLE WHILE.
AFTER THAT, I-


AFTER THAT...

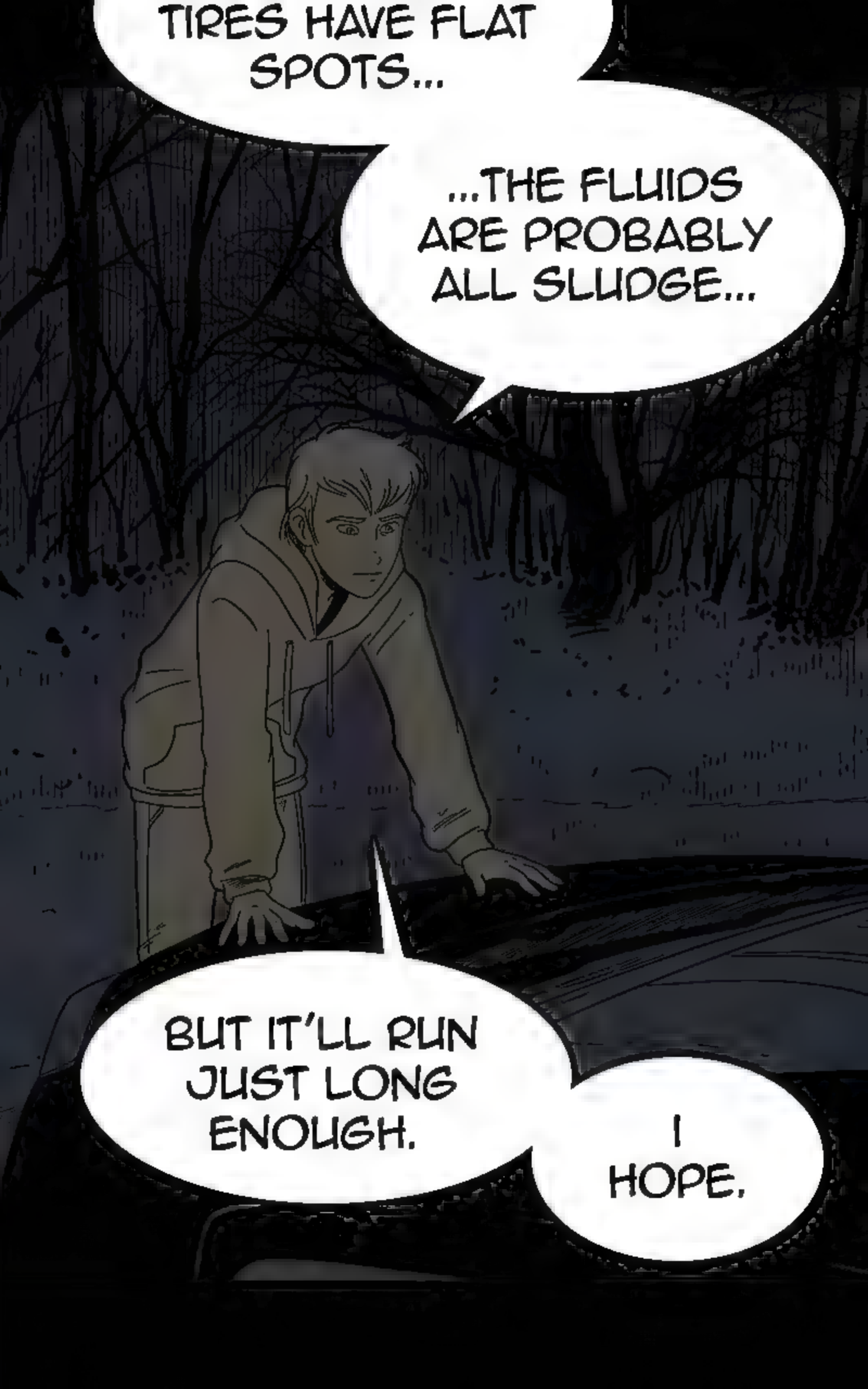
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO HER.


CLACK

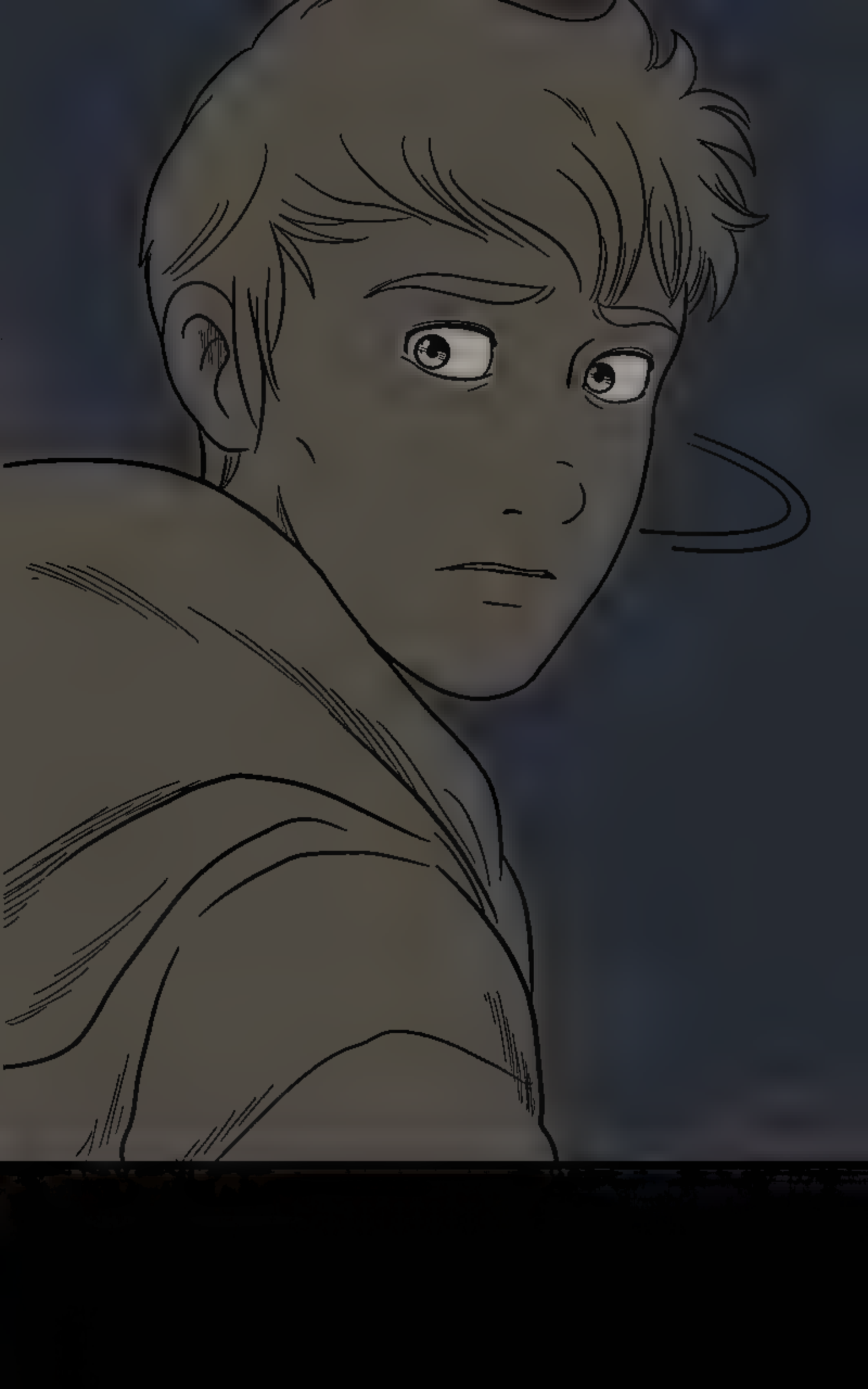

CLACK
CLUNK

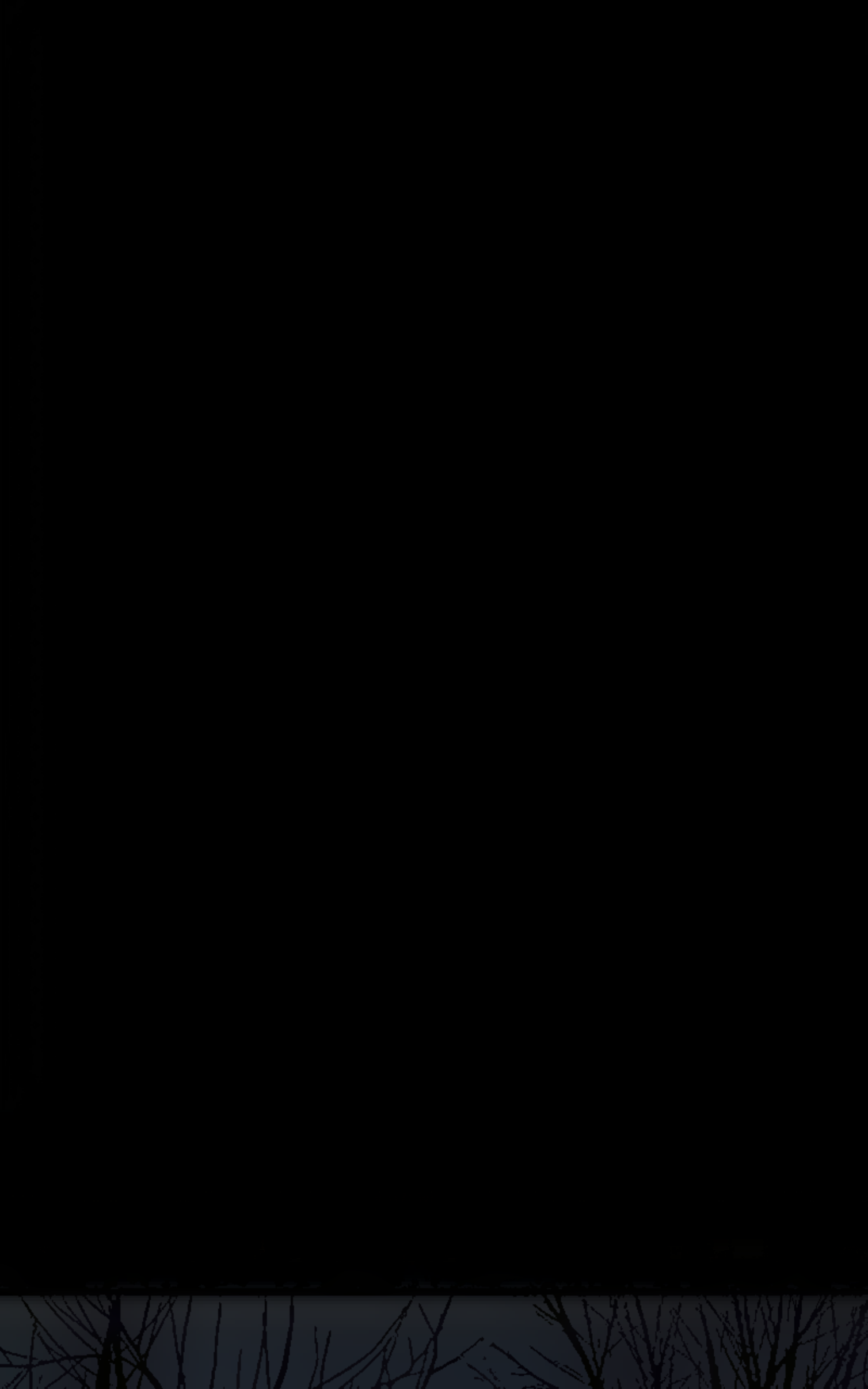

DONE.
FINALLY!

THUNK
WELP, THE

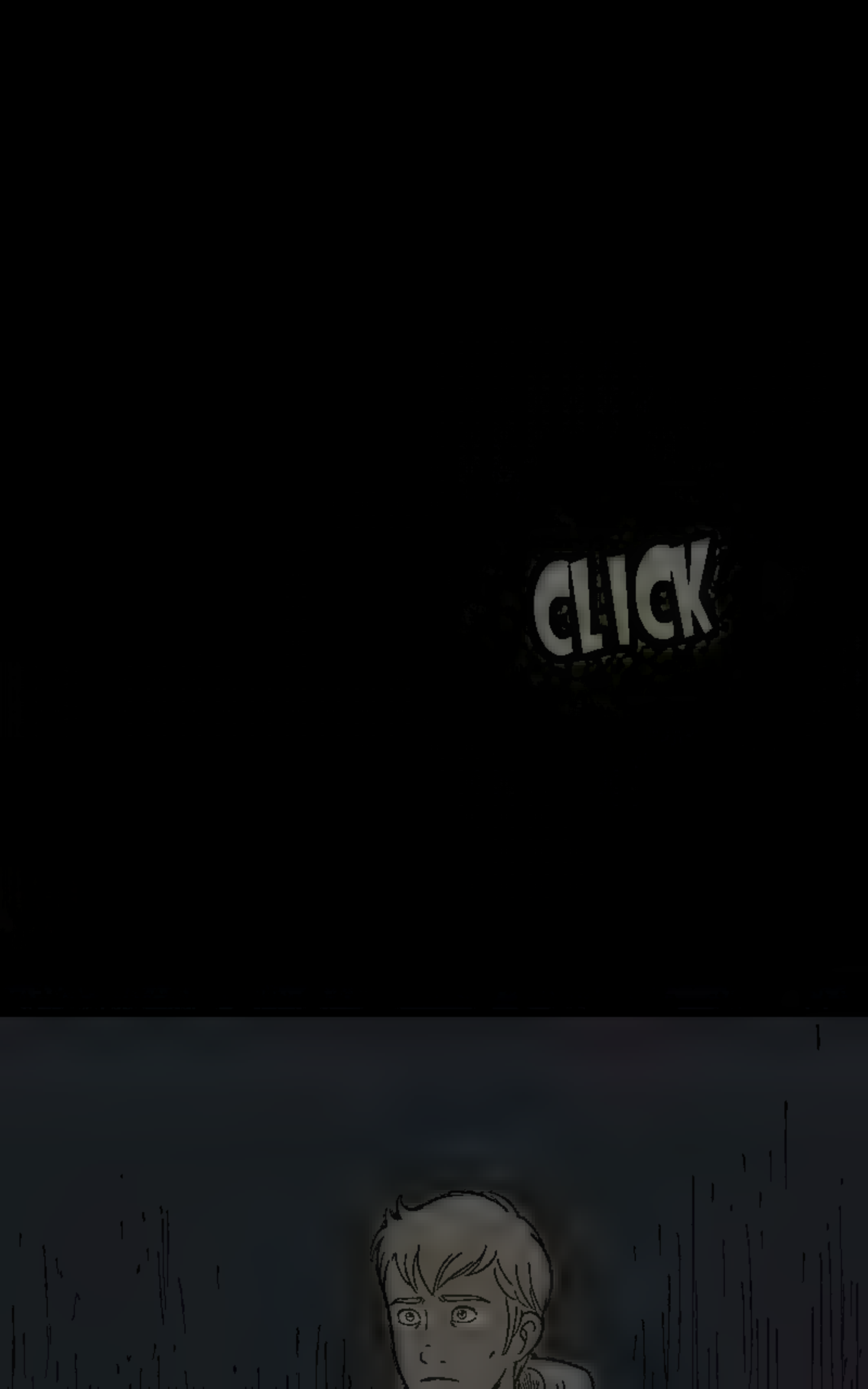

TIRES HAVE FLAT SPOTS...
...THE FLUIDS ARE PROBABLY ALL SLUDGE...
BUT IT'LL RUN JUST LONG ENOUGH.
I HOPE.

RUSTLE

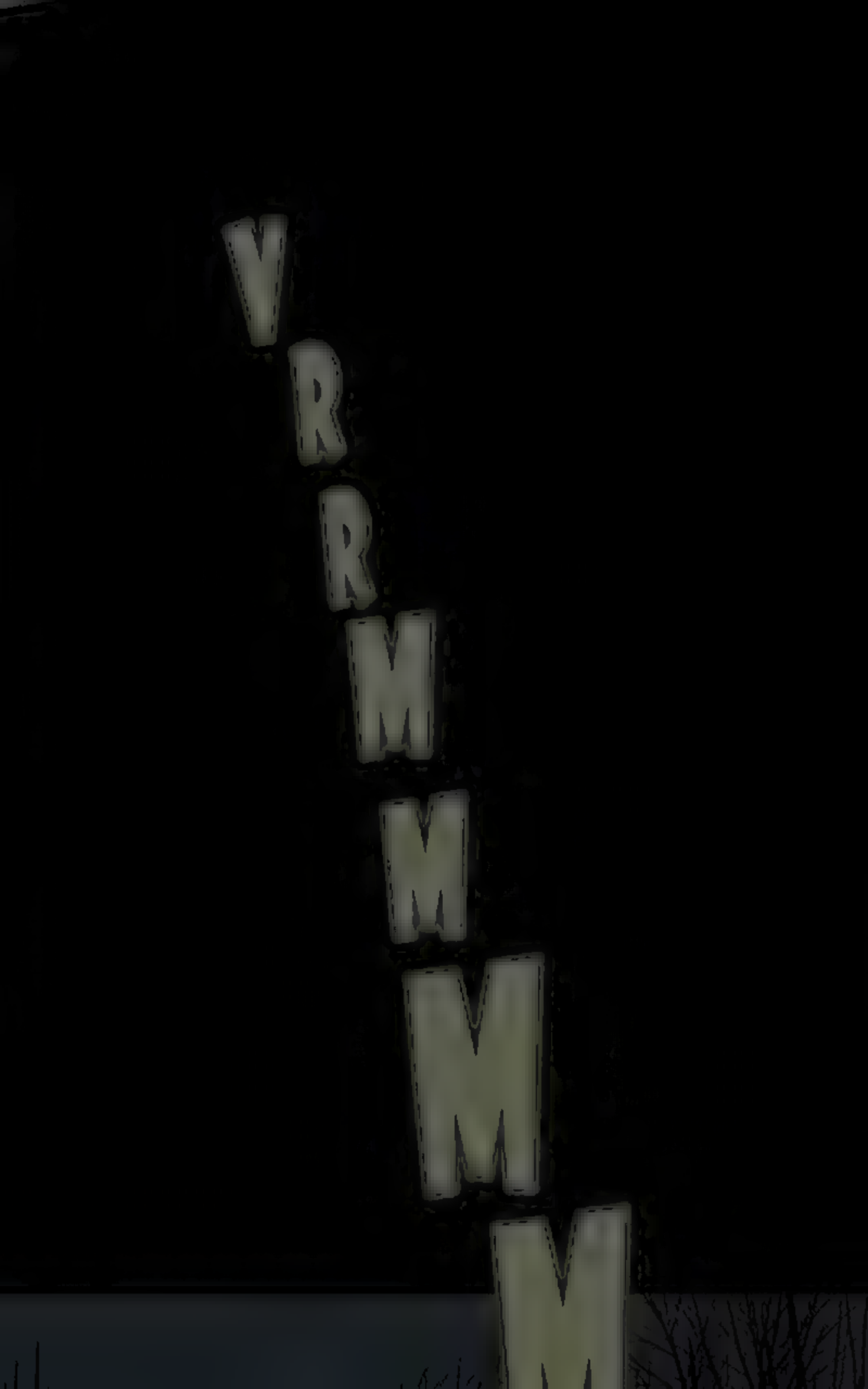




CLICK

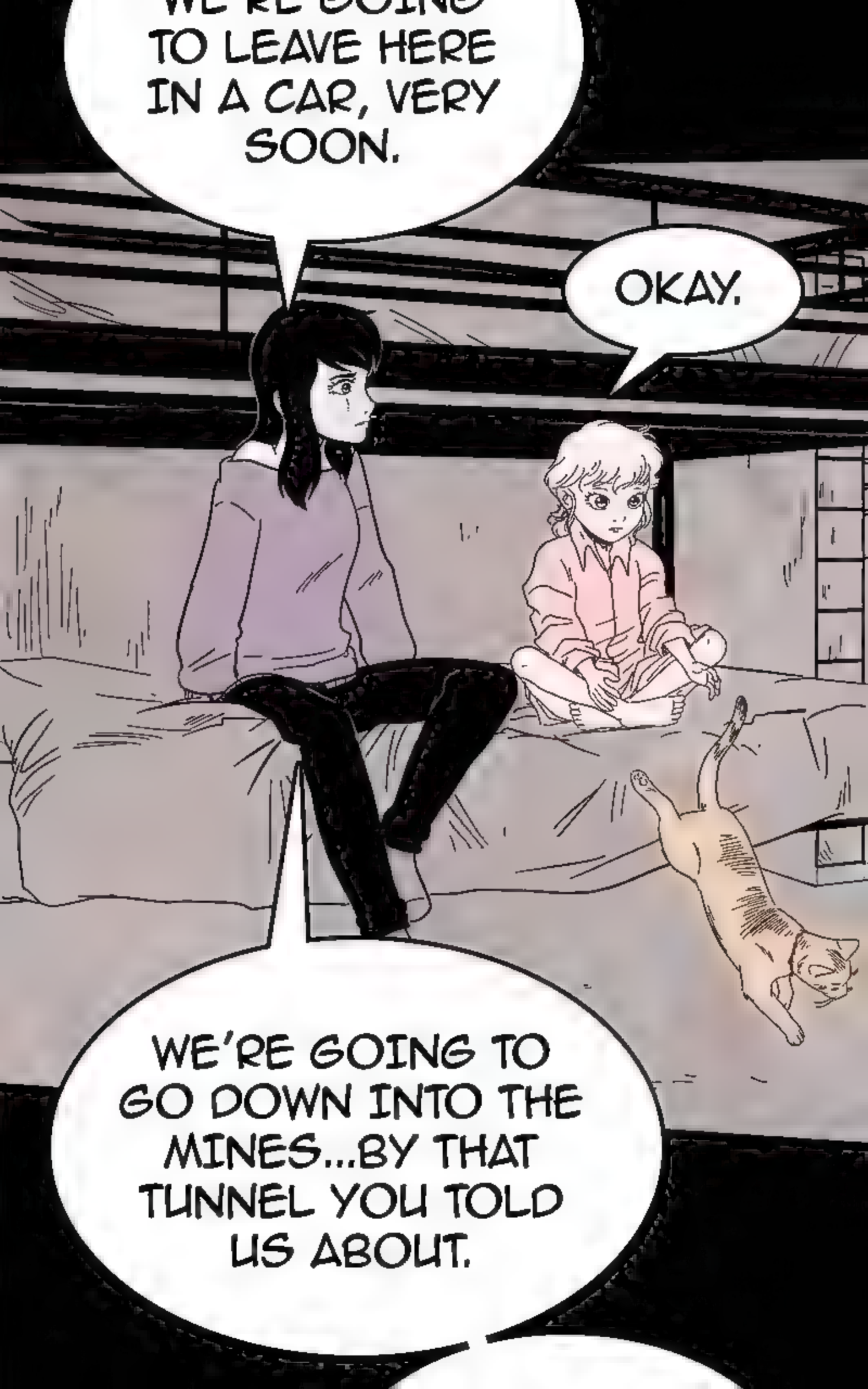


THNK


VRRMMMMM

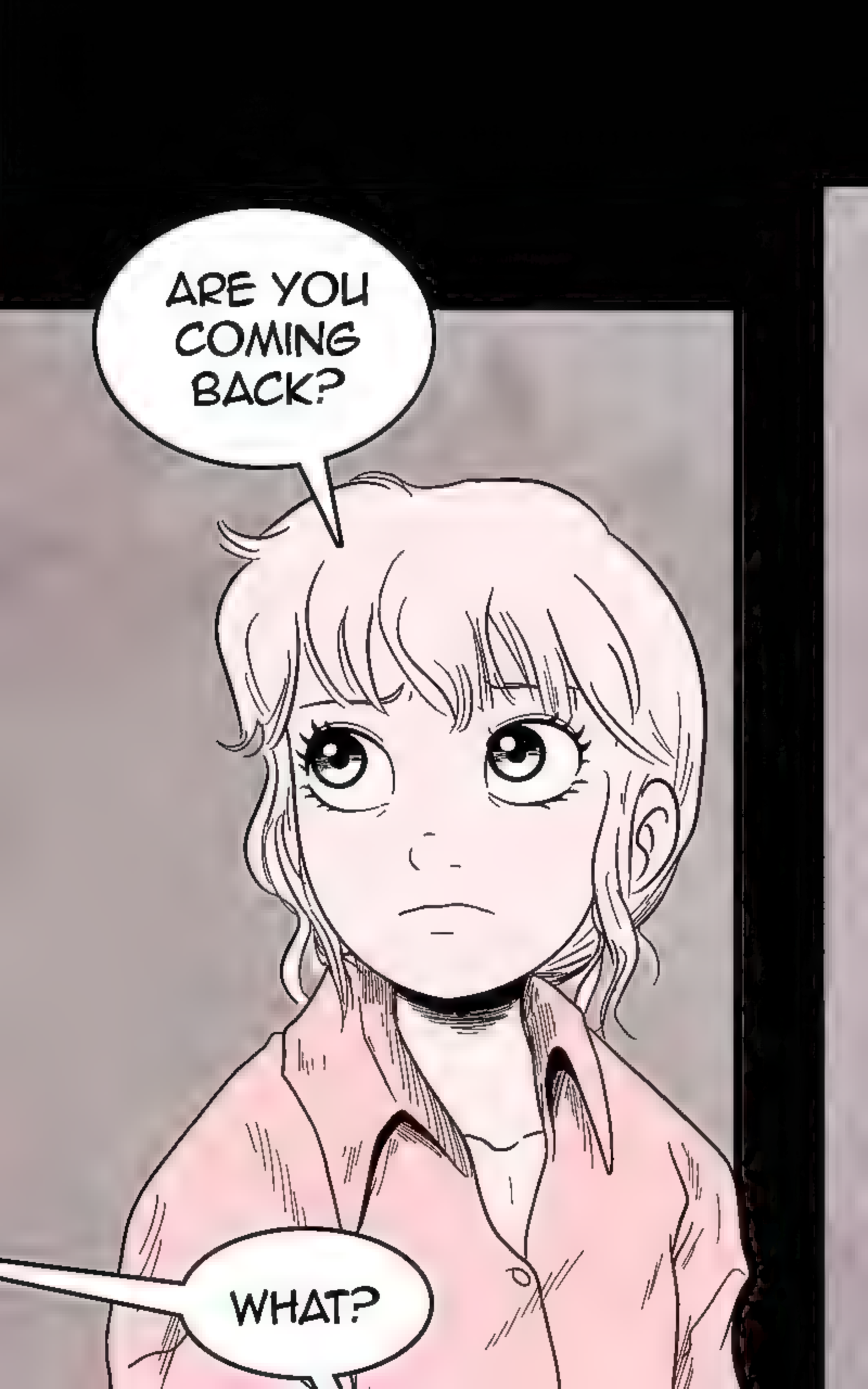
HEY ASHLEY?
CAN I TALK TO YOU?

WE, UM...
WE'RE GOING


TO LEAVE HERE IN A CAR, VERY SOON.
OKAY.
WE'RE GOING TO GO DOWN INTO THE MINES...BY THAT TUNNEL YOU TOLD US ABOUT.

SO WE MAY BE GONE FOR A WHILE.
YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT OUTSIDE FOR US.

WE'RE PUTTING FOOD AND THINGS IN THE CAR FOR YOU. WE MIGHT NOT BE BACK WHEN...
B-BEFORE YOU GET HUNGRY.
OKAY?

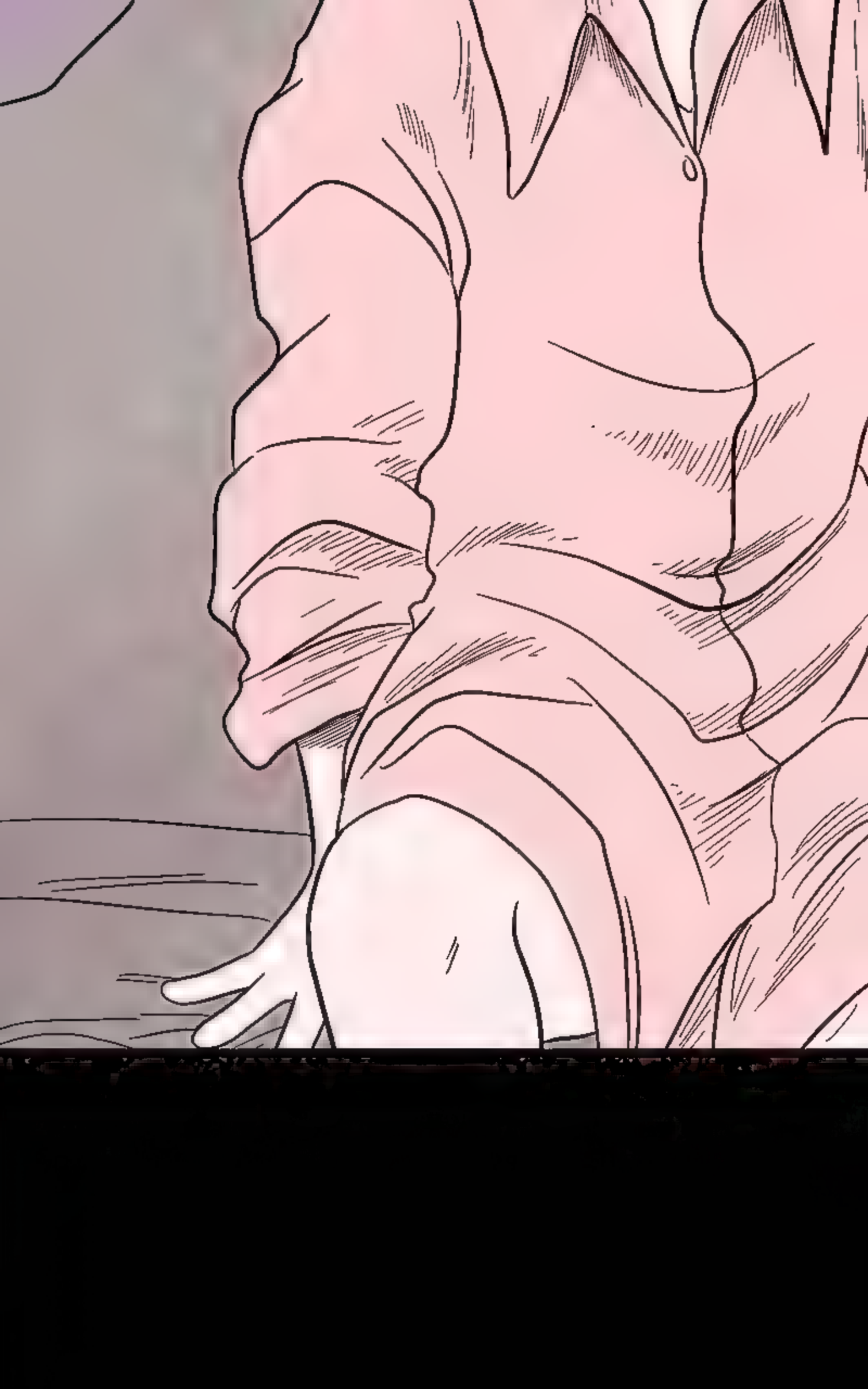

ARE YOU COMING BACK?
WHAT?

O-OF COURSE WE ARE. IT JUST, IT...IT MIGHT BE A WHILE.
WHAT IF YOU DIE?
ASHLEY!

DON'T SAY THAT. NO ONE IS GOING TO DIE. IT'S ALL GOING TO BE OKAY.

THAT MONSTER IS MEAN, FRANKIE. REALLY MEAN.
I KNOW.
BUT WE'VE BEAT IT UP BEFORE.

IT KILLED NOAH.



YOU... YOU KNEW ABOUT-
SNIFF
HE'S N-NOT AT THE DOCTOR...

HE'S G-GONE.
AN' I WISH HE WAS HERE. I DON'T WANNA BE *ALONE* AGAIN...

OH, ASHLEY...

I'M SO SORRY...
I'M SORRY WE
LIED TO YOU.

I'M SORRY THINGS ARE LIKE THIS, I... I JUST...
I'M SORRY YOU CAN'T BE A NORMAL KID...AND HAVE A NORMAL LIFE.
I'M SORRY.

YOU WON'T BE ALONE. LITTLE FRIEND WILL BE WITH YOU. AND...
AND SHE'S GOOD AT SPOTTING MONSTERS.

YOU'LL BE OKAY.
WE *WILL* COME BACK FOR YOU.
I *PROMISE* WE WILL

COME BACK.

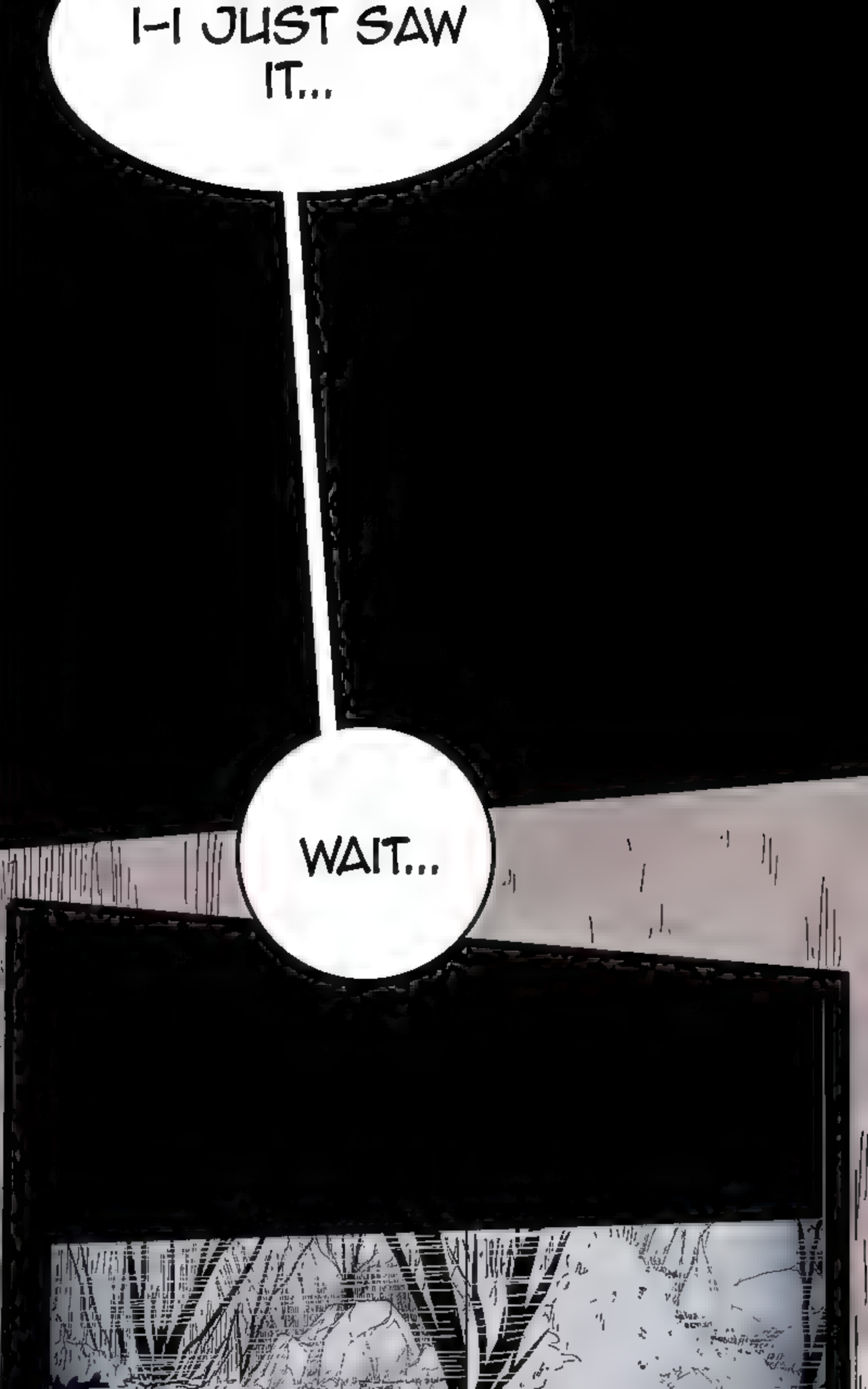
FRANKIE!
FRAN, COME HERE!

FELIX?
WHAT IS
IT?

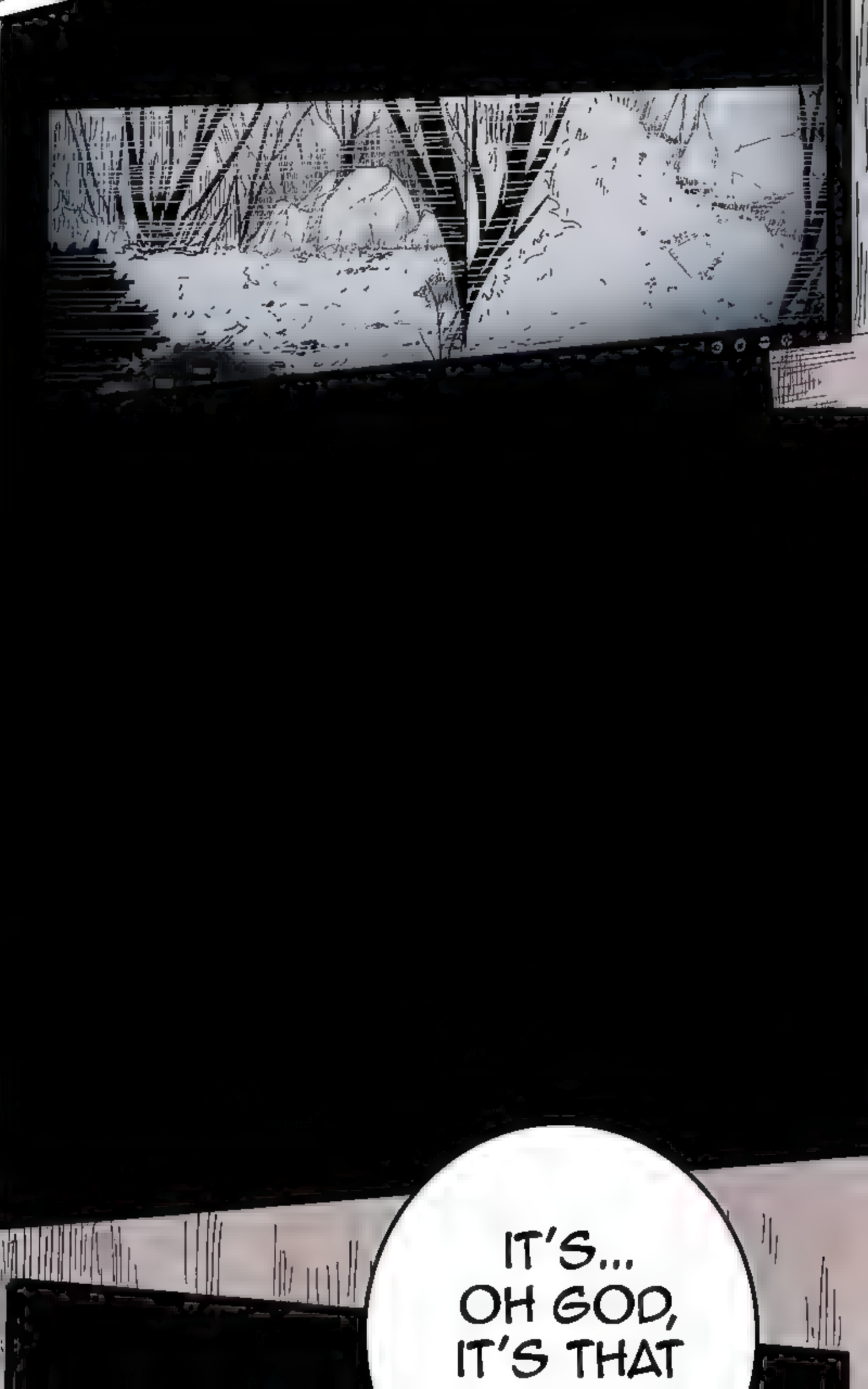
COME LOOK AT THIS!

I-I JUST SAW IT...

WAIT...



JUST KEEP WATCHING...
THERE! SEE IT?


IT'S...
OH GOD,
IT'S THAT

THING...

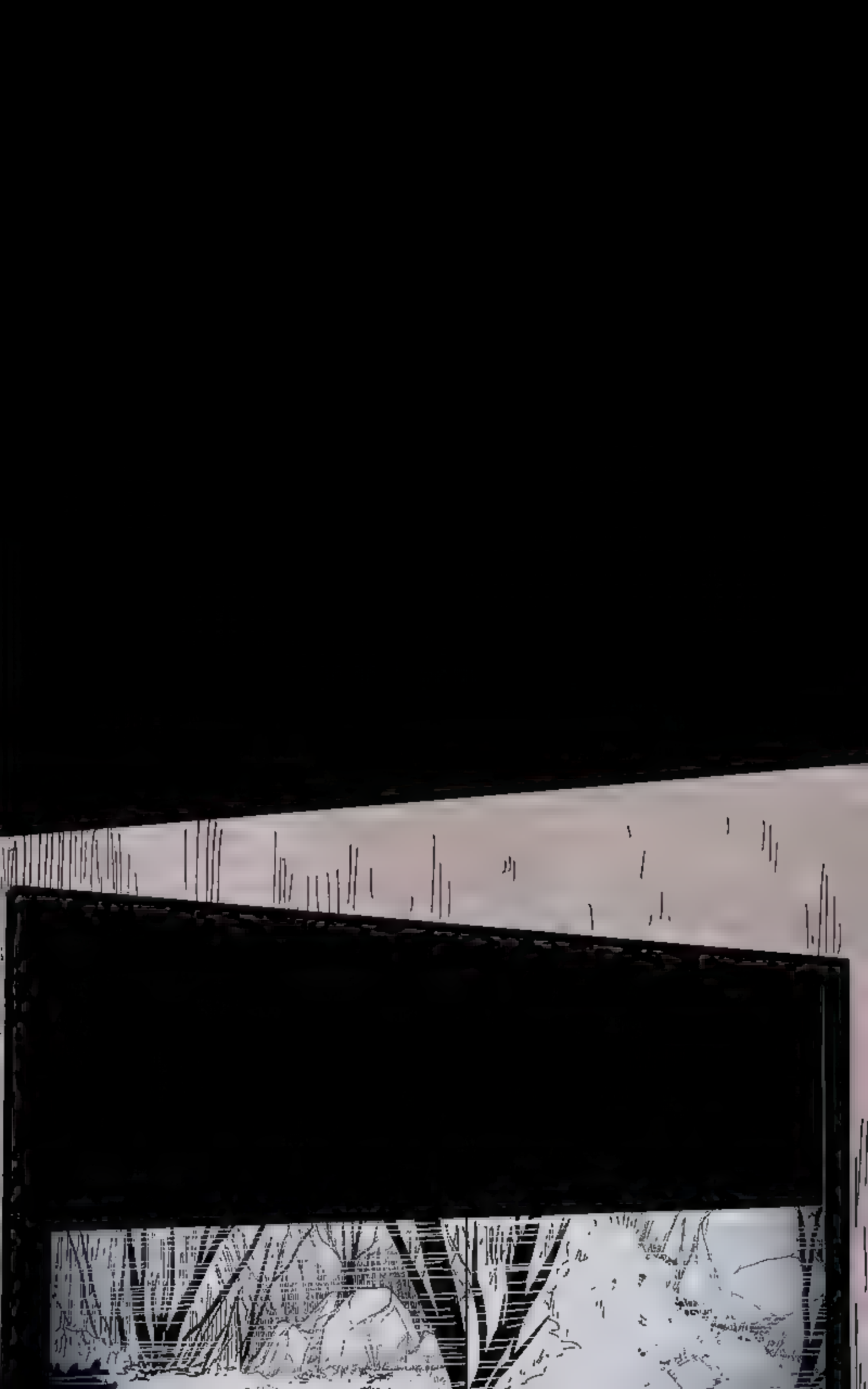
IT'S BY THE HATCH

HATCH, FRAN...

DOES IT... CAN IT SEE IT?

WAIT...
IS IT LEAVING?

W-WHERE DID IT GO...



SKKR

RICH

CLICK

I-IT CUT OFF THE CAMERAS...

IT KNOWS WE'RE HERE...
OH GOD...

JEREMY...

WHEREVER YOU ARE...
TURN AROUND NOW...